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CALLIMACHUS' EPIGRAM ON THE NAUTILUS

BY HENRY W. PRESCOTT

One shrinks from belaboring a Greek epigram with commentary. The little that I have to contribute toward the understanding of Callimachus *Epigr.* v (ed. Wilamowitz), quoted by Athenaeus vii. 318 in the midst of much lore on the polypus, affects mainly the form and style of the epigram, and that little is visibly indicated in the spacing and punctuation and parenthesizing which I give in the text:

Κόγχος ἐγώ, Ζεφυρῖτι, πάλαι τέρας· ἀλλὰ σὺ νῦν με,
Κύπρι, Σεληναίης ἀνθεμα πρῶτον ἔχεις,

ναυτίλος δς πελάγεσσιν ἐπέπλεον (εἰ μὲν ἀῆται,
τείνας οἰκείων λαῖφος ἀπὸ προτόνων,

5 εἰ δὲ Γαληναίη, λιπαρὴ θεός, οὔλος ἐρέσσων

ποσσὶ νιν, ὥστ' ἔργῳ τοῦνομα συμφέρεται)

ἔστ' ἔπεσον παρὰ θίνας Ἰουλίδας ὄφρα γένωμαι

σοὶ τὸ περίσκεπτον παίγνιον, Ἀρσινόη,

μηδέ μοι ἐν θαλάμῃσιν ἔθ' ὥς πάρος, εἰμὶ γὰρ ἄπνους,

10 τίκτηται νοτερῆσ' ὤεον ἀλκυνοίς.

Κλεινίου ἀλλὰ θυγατρὶ δίδου χάριν, οἶδε γὰρ ἐσθλά
ῥέζειν καὶ Σμύρνης ἐστὶν ἀπ' Αἰολίδος.

As an epigram the poem is noticeably long. Only i and xlvi rival it in length and they approximate the hortatory elegy. This poem is clearly a votive inscription in form, and one may properly expect the brevity of the inscription. By the spacing between verses 2 and 3, and 10 and 11, I have indicated the entity of the votive inscription in its simple form. Verses 1-2 and 11-12 are complete in themselves and reproduce the simple type of inscription. To this inscription the insert (vss. 3-10) contributes only a more precise definition of the *κόγχος* as a *ναυτίλος*, the circumstances of its discovery (vs. 7), and the identification of the goddess (vss. 1-2) as Arsinoë (vs. 8). But aside from these interlocking elements which deftly attach the insert to the framework of votive inscription, verses 3-10 are a pedantic inlay in which the author of the *Hypomnemata* has allowed his scientific interest to intrude its way into the midst of the votive

inscription. And within this paragraph of scientific or pseudo-scientific facts regarding the nautilus and the halcyon, the most notable bit of pedantry is emphasized by the sudden break from the secondary tense *ἐπέπλεον* (vs. 3), continued in the aorist *ἔπλεον* (vs. 7), to the primary subjunctive *ἀῆται* (vs. 3) and the present indicative *συμφέρεται* (vs. 6). This parenthetical shift marks the general truths of supposedly scientific fact. The shift to the subjunctives in verses 7 and 10 is different; here there is dramatic vividness, though with an implication of pseudoscientific truth in the halcyon's hatching in the "chambers" of the nautilus. Neatly, therefore, the epigram illustrates in miniature a larger feature of Hellenistic poetry, its indulgence in matters of academic interest, and the combination of qualities that makes Callimachus the best representative of his age, the scholar-poet.

I

The material that indicates the true nature of the insertion has been brought out by Tümpel in an article, "Die Muschel der Aphrodite."¹ Tümpel, however, is interested in the connections of the shellfish with art and with the religious cult of the marine Aphrodite. The facts pertinent to an understanding of the epigram I shall briefly summarize.

Modern science sharply distinguishes the chambered nautilus, known as *Nautilus Pompilius* (a name apparently due to Pliny's hasty identification of *nautilus* and *pompilos* in *Nat. hist.* ix. 88), from the paper nautilus, which scientists call the *Argo Argonauta*. The chambered nautilus is found chiefly in the southern ocean region, for example near the Philippine Islands, where recently extensive studies of its habits have been made. It lives 600 feet below the surface and rarely, if ever, comes to the top. This fish is one organism with the shell, and the shell has chambers. It was quite unfamiliar, probably, to the Mediterranean peoples. On the other hand, the paper nautilus is common in the Mediterranean. It rises to the surface by ejecting water through a pipe-shaped orifice. It has eight arms, two of which resemble the steering oars of an ancient ship, being flappers extended from one end, the other six

¹ *Philologus*, LI (1892), 385-402.

are slender arms that droop in the water. The shell is a fragile egg case which has no chambers¹ and is a distinct organism apart from the fish.

Ancient scientists were keen enough to observe the important fact that the paper nautilus is an organism in which the fish is distinct from the shell, but they indulged in an innocent bit of nature-faking by asserting that under certain circumstances the creature spreads out a thin membrane between two of its arms, and so not only rows but sails over the sea. This notion Callimachus shares with Aristotle, Aelian, and Pliny and betrays thereby his allegiance, not to mere poetic fancy, but to what scientists regarded as sober fact. His indebtedness to the handbooks of science is established not only by his allusion to the membrane in verse 4, but by details of style and phrasing which closely resemble the extant descriptions.

Aristotle *De anim. hist.* 622b 5 (ed. Dittmeyer):

*Ἔστι δὲ καὶ ὁ ναυτίλος πολύπους τῇ τε φύσει καὶ οἷς ποιεῖ περιττός· ἐπιπλεῖ γὰρ ἐπὶ τῆς θαλάττης, τὴν ἀναφορὰν ποιησάμενος κάτωθεν ἐκ τοῦ βυθοῦ, καὶ ἀναφέρεται μὲν κατεστραμμένῳ τῷ ὄστράκῳ ἵνα ῥᾶόν γ' ἀνέλθῃ καὶ κενῷ ναυτίλλῃται, ἐπιπολάσας δὲ μεταστρέφει. ἔχει δὲ μεταξύ τῶν πλεκτανῶν τι συνφυές, οἷον ἔστι τοῖς στεγανόποσι τὸ μεταξύ τῶν δακτύλων· πλὴν ἐκείνους μὲν παχύ, τοῖς τοῖς δὲ λεπτόν τοῦτο καὶ ἀραχνιώδες ἔστιν. χρῆται δ' αὐτῷ ὅταν πνευμάτιον ᾗ, ἰστίῳ· ἀντὶ πηδαλίων δὲ < δύο > τῶν πλεκτανῶν παρακαθίσιν· ἐὰν δὲ φοβηθῇ, καταδύναι τῆς θαλάττης μεστῶσας τὸ ὄστρακον.

525a 21: *Ἐτι δ' ἄλλοι δύο ἐν ὄστρεοῖς, ὃ τε καλούμενος ὑπὸ τινων ναυτίλος [καὶ ποντίλος ὑπ' ἐνὶν· ἔστι δ' οἷον πολύπους]· τὸ δ' ὄστρακον αὐτοῦ ἔστιν οἷον κτεῖς κοῖλος καὶ οὐ συμφυές. οὗτος νέμεται πολλάκις παρὰ τὴν γῆν, εἴθ' ὑπὸ τῶν κυμάτων ἐκκλύζεται εἰς τὸ ξηρόν, καὶ παραπεσόντος τοῦ ὄστρεου ἀλίσκεται ἢ ἐν τῇ γῇ ἀποθνήσκει. [Compare also Aristotle as quoted in Athenaeus 316 C, 317 F.]

Aelian *De anim.* ix. 34:

*Ὁ δὲ ναυτίλος πολύπους ἔστι καὶ αὐτός, καὶ κόγχην μίαν ἔχει. ἀναπλεῖ μὲν οὖν τὴν κόγχην στρέψας περὶ τὰ κάτω ἵνα μὴ τῆς ἄλμης ἀρύσῃται καὶ ὠθήσῃ αὐτὸν· γεόμενος δὲ ἐπὶ τοῖς κύμασιν, ὅταν μὲν ᾗ γαλήνη καὶ εἰρήνη πνευμάτων, στρέφει τὴν κόγχην ὑπτίαν (ἢ δὲ ἐπιπλεῖ δίκην πορθμίδος) καὶ παρὲς δύο πλεκτάνας ἐντεῦθεν τε καὶ ἐκείθεν καὶ ὑποκινῶν ἡσυχῇ ἐρέττει τε καὶ προωθεῖ τὴν < οὐ > συμφυῆ νῆα. εἰ δὲ εἴῃ πνεῦμα, τοὺς ἐρετμοὺς μὲν τοὺς τέως προτείνας μακροτέρας οἰάκας ἐργάζεται, ἄλλας δὲ ἀνατείνας

¹ The "chambers" in vs. 9 of the epigram are simply the nest of the nautilus, as is shown by *Odyssey* v. 432 and the Homeric *Hymn to Apollo* 77-78; cf. Athenaeus 316 E, F; 317 E.

πλεκτάνας, ὃν μέσος χιτών ἐστι λεπτότατος, τοῦτον διαστήσας ἰστίον αὐτὸν ἀποφαίνει. πλεῖ μὲν δὴ τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον ἀδεῖς ὦν· ἔαν μέντοι φοβηθῇ τι τῶν ἀδρωτέρων, βυθίσας τὴν κόγχην ἐπλήρωσε καὶ κατώλισθεν ἐκ τοῦ βάρους καὶ ἑαυτὸν ἀφανίσας τὸν ἔχθρὸν ἀπέδρα. εἶτα ἐν εἰρήνῃ γενόμενος ἀνέθορέ τε καὶ πλεῖ πάλιν. καὶ ἐκ τούτων ἔχει τὸ ὄνομα.

Pliny *Nat. Hist.* ix. 103 (referring to *conchae*):

Navigant ex eis Veneriae praebentesque concavam sui partem et aurae opposcentes per summa aequorum velificant.

ix. 94 [after referring to *saepiae*]: Navigeram similitudinem et aliam in Propontide visam sibi prodidit Mucianus: concham esse acatii modo carinatam, inflexa puppe, prora rostrata. in hanc condi nauplium [cf. MSS of Artemidorus *Onir.* ii. 14], animal saepiae simile, ludendi societate sola. duobus hoc fieri generibus: *tranquillo* enim vectorem demissis palmulis ferire ut remis; *si vero flatus invitet*, easdem in usum gubernaculi porrigi pandique buccarum sinus aurae. huius voluptatem esse ut ferat, illius ut regat, simulque eam descendere in duo sensu carentia. nisi forte tristi—id enim constat—omine navigantium humana calamitas in causa est.

ix. 88: Inter praecipua autem miracula est qui vocatur nautilus, ab aliis pompilos [cf. Tümpel, *loc. cit.*, p. 388, n. 8]. supinus in summa aequorum pervenit, ita se paulatim adsubrigens ut emissa omni per fistulam aqua velut exoneratus sentina facile naviget. Postea prima duo brachia retorquens membranam inter illa mirae tenuitatis extendit, qua velificante in aura, ceteris subremigans brachiis, media se cauda ut gubernaculo regit. ita vadit alto Liburnicarum gaudens imagine, si quid pavoris interveniat, hausta se mergens aqua.

Obviously these passages offer material to those who have a zest for source-hunting, a sport which at present does not primarily attract me. Starting, for convenience, with the end of the second passage from Pliny, we may note that Callimachus and Pliny are alone in attaching any ominous significance to the action of the nautilus. Pliny, or his source, seems to be contrasting, by implication, two explanations of the animal's action. In one view the nautilus' movements are a purely pleasurable function, a playful tendency that it shares with the *saepia*. In its rowing or sailing it is indulging its sense of *voluptas*. It is the pleasure of the one (the shell) to carry the fish, of the other (the fish) to guide the shell, and that pleasure enters at once into two creatures devoid of sense. The qualification is then made that its sailing and rowing are recognized by navigators as ominous, presumably of approaching storms. This superstition Callimachus (if an emendation of the text in Athenaeus

by Schneider, based on the passage in Pliny, is accepted: *πάλαυ τέρας* for *παλαίτερος*) introduces in the inscriptional framework of his epigram.

With the same passage of Pliny and with the passage of Aelian there is rather close similarity in Callimachus' phrasing of the antithetical description of windy and calm weather: *εἰ μὲν ἀήται*, *εἰ δὲ Γαληναίη, λιπαρὴ θεός*. . . . Here in reverse order Aelian has *ὅταν μὲν ἦ γαλήνη καὶ εἰρήνη πνευμάτων*, *εἰ δὲ εἷη πνεῦμα*, and Pliny *tranquillo* *si vero flatus invitet*. Aristotle does not explicitly contrast the rowing in calm weather with the sailing in windy weather, but introducing the latter feature says: *ὅταν πνεύματιον ᾖ*. It would be hazardous, on the basis of this slight phraseological evidence of closer relation between Callimachus, Pliny, and Aelian than between any of them and Aristotle, to stress more than has already been done the fact that Callimachus' name stands in the list of sources for Pliny's ninth book. But it is interesting to note the possibility that Callimachus' *Hypomnemata* may have contained a fuller account of the nautilus, from which he drew in his epigram and which affected the later handbook tradition regarding the fish. The conditional formula is common to Callimachus, Aelian, and Pliny. But the *ὅταν* formula is shared by Aristotle and Aelian. And there are other details that link together Aristotle, Aelian, and Pliny, such as the fact of the nautilus' sinking from apprehension, as Aelian puts it, of larger fish (Aristotle and Aelian, *εἰάν* *φοβηθῇ*, and Pliny ix. 88, "si quid pavoris interveniat"; and cf. Oppian *Halieut.* i. 350).

Somewhat less explicitly than we might expect, an etymological interest appears in the scientific prose. The nautilus is so called because it is a navigator. This somewhat obvious fact seems to lurk beneath the sequence in Aristotle of *ναυτίλος* *ἐπιπλεῖ γὰρ* *ναυτίλλεται* , and in Aelian of *ναυτίλος* *ἀναπλεῖ* *ἐπιπλεῖ δίκην πορθμίδος* , followed at the conclusion of the description by *καὶ ἐκ τούτων ἔχει τὸ ὄνομα*. Doubtless the use of *navigare* and related words in Pliny reflects this interest somewhat dimly. Here, again, Callimachus shares with Aristotle and Aelian the particular compound *ἐπιπλεῖν*, and one may fairly suspect that the beginning of verse 3 in the epigram is not entirely innocent of

etymological significance: *ναυτίλος δς πελάγεσσιν ἐπέπλεον*.¹ And in verse 6 it is explicit.

These small points simply reinforce the general resemblance in the accounts of the nautilus' sailing and rowing its craft. In the statement of this substantial point Callimachus is brief and offers little evidence of direct connection with the scientific prose. Aristotle had already referred to the membrane as a sail, though he refrained from an explicit reference to the two arms as elevated and correctly describes them as drooping in the water. Nor does Aristotle explicitly describe the animal as rowing. Aelian, on the other hand, like Callimachus, brings out clearly the act of rowing in calm weather and sailing in windy weather, and his diction is close to that of the epigram; so *προτείνας* and *ἀνατείνας* in Aelian are closer to Callimachus' *τείνας* . . . *ἀπὸ προτόνων* than to anything in Aristotle. The passages from Pliny considerably expand the description of the animal as a boat, but the details in phrasing bear no special resemblance to the diction of the epigram.²

In brief, therefore, Callimachus is dryly scientific. Such pretty fancy as a modern reader may see in the description is only the pretty fancy of the nature-faking scientist of the day.³

¹ The reading of Athenaeus' text is *ναυτίλον δς* . . . *ἐπέπλεον*. Kaibel's emendation to *ναυτίλος δς* may be attractive from a stylistic point of view, but if Callimachus was conscious of an etymological force, the MS reading in Athenaeus would bring this out more distinctly than Kaibel's emendation.

² For the source-hunter Oppian *Halieut.* i. 338 ff. makes an interesting addition to the material. Wellmann, *Hermes*, XXX (1895), 166, n. i, briefly dismisses it as one of many passages in Oppian that are in agreement with Aelian, but there is much more to be said of it. E.g., Oppian has in common with Aristotle, as quoted in Athenaeus 318 A, the phrase *λεπτὸς ὑμῆν* of the membrane and sail. The etymological interest comes out plainly in vss. 340 and 344: *ναυτίλον οικειῆσιν ἐπικλέα ναυτιλίῃσι* . . . *ναυτιλῆται*. But even more significant are the few phrases peculiar to Oppian and Callimachus. So Oppian echoes the word *λαΐφος* in vs. 4 of our epigram in his account of the sailing (345 ff.): *μέσσοις δὲ διαρρέει ἥτε λαΐφος λεπτὸς ὑμῆν*. And later, when Oppian suggests (354 ff.) that the human boat-builder must have taken hints from the nautilus, he appropriates Callimachus' *ἐκ προτόνων* in vss. 358-59: *τὰ μὲν πνοιῇσι πετάσσας ἐκ προτόνων*. At least I think we may fairly draw that inference if he has just previously taken *λαΐφος* from Callimachus. Whether Oppian drew immediately from Callimachus or from intermediary sources on which Callimachus had left his mark, I cheerfully leave to Wellmann and others to decide, but the influence of the Hellenistic scholar-poet upon the later tradition about the nautilus is fairly clear. Oppian's *ἄκατος* (vs. 344) should be noted in connection with *acatii modo* in Pliny ix. 94.

³ Lucian (*Ver. hist.* ii. 45) in his Rabelaisian account of the human boats was probably not unconscious of these descriptions of the nautilus. In his story the human beings are both sailors and boats, just as the nautilus owing to the lack of organic connection between the fish and shell is both a sailor and a boat—not to speak of other details.

II

Into this abstract from an encyclopedia the note on the halcyon in verses 9–10 of the epigram probably fits quite neatly, but I am unable to parallel from any other sources the fact that the halcyon was supposed to hatch its eggs in the nest of the nautilus. Indeed, the statement seems to be in contradiction of the familiar accounts of the halcyon's ingeniously constructed nest (Arist. *De hist. anim.* 616a 14 ff., Aelian *De anim.* ix. 17, Plutarch *De soll. anim.* 35, *De amore prol.* 2, and the burlesque in Lucian *Ver. hist.* ii. 40). Perhaps the nautilus' nest served in an emergency. The halcyon's normal nest is compared to a boat by Plutarch, and the nautilus' shell was obviously a good substitute. In any case such habits on the part of the bird were probably not disassociated in the minds of the scientists from the etymology which connected ἀλκυών with τὸ ἐν ἀλλί κτεῖν (cf. schol. Theocr. vii. 57 and *Hermes*, xxvi [1891], 516). Of some association between the nautilus and the halcyon there may be slight evidence in the poem of Hedyle, which Jacobs has quoted, in which Glaucus, in love with Scylla, brought her as gifts κόγχοι or "the still unwinged children of the halcyon" (*ap. Athen.* 297 B). Nor is it uninteresting to observe that the sea off Megara and Boeotia (and so near the island of Ceos, on which Selenaea, according to our epigram, found the nautilus' shell) was such a favorite haunt of the halcyons as to be called θάλαττα ἀλκυονίδς (cf. *P.W.R.E.*, s. v. "Eisvogel"). And in this same general region there is a taboo against fishing for the "oar-driven polypus," as Clearchus of Soloi (*ap. Athen.* 317 A) attests for the town of Trozen (cf. Wide, *De sacris Troizenis*, pp. 31 ff.), where the cult of Aphrodite was prominent.

III

In spite of the pedantry, there is a touch of sympathy, of restrained feeling. The life of the nautilus is over. Its service as a portent and as offering a nesting-place for the halcyon is ended. It is elevated to a higher service. It becomes the precious toy of Arsinoë-Aphrodite (cf. *A.P.* vi. 224. 5–6).

The framework and a few details in the insertion supply the occasion. Selenaea, sailing from Smyrna to Alexandria, stopped at the island of Ceos and there found the shell on the beach (cf. Aristotle 525a 21, quoted above). Its beauty, the established connection of

the shell with Aphrodite,¹ the interest of Selenaea as a young girl in the goddess, all made it a fit offering to the divinity. On reaching Alexandria she found the recently built temple of Aphrodite-Arsinoë a natural depository for her gift. Probably soon after 274 B.C. the identification of Arsinoë, wife of the second Ptolemy, with Aphrodite took a very tangible form. Callicrates, admiral in the royal navy, and a persistent propagator of divine honors to the royal house, dedicated a temple to Arsinoë-Aphrodite on Cape Zephyrium. The location emphasized the goddess' function as a sea divinity without diminishing her efficacy as a goddess of love. Callimachus, as court poet, was doubtless more than willing to write the dedicatory epigram for the shell, especially if the dedication was made before the queen's death in 270. His birthplace was Cyrene, farther west on the same coast. And the setting and details of Plautus' *Rudens* suggest how important in that town was the worship of the marine Aphrodite; her favor for the shipwrecked maidens of the play is sought in the plea: "te ex concha natam esse autumant, cave tu harum conchas spernas" (vs. 704). As a marine goddess Aphrodite was concerned with insuring calm voyages, just as her sacred nautilus was a helpful indication to sailors of approaching storms. So Posidippus (*ap.* Athen. 318 D), celebrating the very temple in which Selenaea made her offering, says: "Worship at this temple, situate on sea and land, shrine of Cypris-Arsinoë-Philadelphus, which Callicrates, the admiral, was the first to dedicate on the beach of Zephyrium. And the goddess shall grant thee fair voyaging (εὐπλοΐην), and in the midst of storm, in answer to prayer, she shall smooth the surface of the sea." Selenaea may well have been grateful to such a goddess after her long voyage from Smyrna to Alexandria. Her thank-offering was peculiarly appropriate. Her poet, by sympathetic knowledge of the cult from boyhood, by his association with the court, and his combination of scholarly interest and poetic skill, was singularly equipped for the task. And the new temple offered a dignified resting-place for the shell.

There is, however, no explicit gratitude expressed for a peaceful voyage. From the epigram we gather that the offering is made only

¹ Cf. Tümpel, *loc. cit.*, p. 386, and notes for the sinister suggestiveness of similar shells.

to secure the future favor of the goddess. And the request is justified on the ground that Selenaea οἶδε . . . ἐσθλὰ ῥέζειν. Schneider thought that her virtue must lie in her artistic skill in having the epigram put upon the shell. Meineke and Haupt referred it to skill in the artistic coloring of the shell. Kaibel rightly observes (*Hermes*, XXXI [1896], 265) that the phrase cannot allude to the deft practice of any particular art: "Es heisst vielmehr, das gute, richtige thun." It is moral worth, "der Ausfluss eines braven Herzens und Charakters." With this I cordially agree. But Kaibel proceeds to interpret the final couplet with what seems to me misdirected ingenuity. "Wenn ein junges Mädchen . . . die Aphrodite um eine Gunst als Lohn für ihre Gabe anfleht, so kann das Gebet wohl nur bedeuten 'und schenk ihr einen braven Mann; denn brav ist sie selbst, und willst du wissen, wo sie zu finden ist, sie wohnt in Smyrna.'" Certainly we must be prepared for subtlety in Callimachus, but I hesitate to turn the epigram into documentary proof of the use of Arsinoë's temple as a matrimonial bureau, even if Aphrodite's temples were used for worse purposes. Kaibel does not offer any further evidence of a young woman's leaving her visiting card and address in a temple of Aphrodite. Doubtless respectable Greek women in the Hellenistic period were freer than in the fifth century, but such a degree of freedom runs counter to our general notions of their liberty at any time. And so far as the style of epigrams is involved, why should we regard Callimachus' language as anything more than a variation on the early prosaic formula of "Selenaea of Smyrna in Aeolis, a worthy woman, dedicates this offering"? For Kaibel's idea no substantial comfort, I think, is furnished by another epigram of Posidippus (which Kaibel does not quote) on this same temple, in which the temple delivers a general invitation: "Now to Aphrodite . . . come ye, one and all, devout daughters of the Greeks, and ye men who make your living on the sea; for the admiral hath made this temple a haven of rest from every storm" (Schott, *Posidippi epigr.*, No. 2). This invitation probably comprehends the two functions of the divinity as goddess of the sea and of love; Love has its storms, and the Greek daughters need a haven of refuge from the sea of Love, familiar to readers of amatory poetry. But Posidippus was hardly providing a rendezvous.

The range of the phrase οἶδε . . . ἐσθλὰ ῥέζειν, in various forms, is wide. Kaibel quotes enough to prove its applicability to moral character. One might note that the words of Telemachus in *Odyssey* xviii. 228-29 indicate that the phrase might refer to arrival at the age of maturity when the distinction between right and wrong is established in practice. This is Selenaea's first offering; she claims the goddess' favor now that she has reached womanhood and proved her stability of character. The favor is expected in connection with love and marriage, but Selenaea is hardly advertising herself in open market.

IV

The epigram has interesting associations with modern poetry. Our American poet, Dr. Holmes, was probably not familiar with it. In his "Chambered Nautilus" he refers to the fish as a ship of pearl, a venturesome bark, and to its purple wings, and then carefully qualifies the description with the words "poets feign." To equip the chambered nautilus with a sail is even more daring than to rig out the paper nautilus as a sailboat. For, as we have noted, the chambered nautilus does not even rise to the surface of the water. I do not know whether Dr. Holmes is responsible for this extension of the fanciful idea from the paper to the chambered nautilus, or whether he correctly ascribes it to earlier poets. The only earlier passage of English poetry that I have found referring to the nautilus is Pope's *Essay on Man*, Ep. III, ll. 178-79; Pope, instructing man to profit by the ways of animals, says:

Learn of the little nautilus to sail,
Spread the thin oar, and catch the driving gale.

Pope's own note refers to and translates Oppian's *Halieutica*, and there is no indication that he had in mind the chambered nautilus. But at all events I suspect that Dr. Holmes, after his apology for the unscientific poets, would have been surprised to find the paper nautilus sailing peacefully through the pages of Aristotle and Pliny.

Of direct connection with Callimachus' epigram there can be little doubt in the case of Mr. Edmund Gosse's poem, "The Nautilus," which was published in his volume called *Russet and Silver*. This poem is a dedicatory epigram in form: "Venus, take this shell,

offering of a bride." Even the halcyon is brought in, though only by way of simile: "Halcyon-like, this mariner cleft the blue." The ship is "rigged with gossamer," in the traditional style. But Mr. Gosse has changed the occasion of the offering, or, perhaps, like Kaibel, has read into the Greek poem a meaning which it does not explicitly convey. The nautilus shell is presented to Venus by a bride apparently apprehensive of the miracle of marriage. However, source-hunting is dangerous when the poet is still alive to correct hasty inferences. I hope the bards will continue their happy fancies regarding the nautilus without even Dr. Holmes's pedantic reservations.

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO